United Nations A/HRC/38/NGO/43

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 June 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-eighth session
18 June-6 July 2018
Agenda item 9
Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Written statement* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-09030(E)
1809030

Please recycle

Islamophobia in Europe

It seems as if the fear of Muslims, escalated by terrorist attack will never leave the Europe Muslims in peace. For years, there have been reports of attacks and hate speech against Muslims in European countries. The findings of European Islamophobia surveys proves Islamophobia in Europe. A survey findings indicate that the majority of European people are against migration of Muslim people to their countries. The percentage of people who expressed such views amount to about 50 percent in The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK), over 60 percent in France1. The findings of another survey shows that 43 percent of European respondents are reported to have an unfavourable view of Muslims. In percentage of such responses amount to 28 in UK, 29 in France and 34 in Netherlands2. The present statement discusses cases of Islamophobia in England, France and the Netherlands.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK)

Reports indicate that in the UK, Islamophobia has been on the rise for the past 20 years3, subjecting Muslims to widespread discrimination and violation of their rights. Anti-Muslim hatred has escalated to a point that survey even reveal non-Muslim men harassment because of looking like Muslims. The participants of the survey who look like Muslims have reported various cases of verbal and physical abuse, intimidation and damages to their properties4. The studies prove that the on-going hate crimes against Muslims make the victims suffer from psychological stress, as well as marginalizing them in the society, limiting their chances of social and political participation.

Also, anti-Muslim racism affects the Muslim employment rate in the UK. The available research findings prove Muslim house-holds to be in poverty in comparison to the overall population. In addition, research reveals under presence of Muslims in managerial, administrative and professional jobs and indicates that the employment rate of Muslims is lower than the whole population in the UK5.

France

In France, the secular principles have a tendency to "isolate and stigmatize" Muslims. The mass media tend to associate Muslims with terrorists, igniting a feeling of hatred toward Muslims, isolating them and pushing them to the margins of society. It seems as if the secular principles tend to discriminate against Muslims, contradicting the values of "equal treatment" of people in modern democracies.

The islamophobic feelings are reflected both in government decisions and the personal biases expressed by individuals. For example, a ban has been announced on Hejaab 6and on Muslim street prayers7 by the country officials. Official figures prove the existence of attacks against Muslims and their religious sites in France, although the cases decreased in 2016 comparing to the year before.

Several French mayors have taken measures to restrict freedom of dress in the coastal regions, and by citing public order and secularism as justifications, have tried to ban full covering beachwear (i.e. bikini etc.) and on several occasions, have harassed women for their attire in these regions.[8] Also they prevent Muslim women from wearing hijab in public schools.[9]

In addition, many owners of halal restaurants and Muslim citizens think that they are searched by the police solely because of their religion.[10] Islamophobia has various forms like profanation of cemeteries and mosques, physical attacks, insults, provocations and burning or profanation of the Koran and Muslims.[11]

1. https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/what-do-europeans-think-about-muslim-immigration
2. http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/07/11/negative-views-of-minorities-refugees-common-in-eu/
3. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/11/islamophobia-changed-20-years-171116120107753.html
4. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/muslim-hate-abuse-racism-uk-verbal-physical-emotional-look-beards-islamophobia-research-a8005156.html
5. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/sep/07/islamophobia-holding-back-uk-muslims-in-workplace-study-finds
6. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/14/headscarves-and-muslim-veil-ban-debate-timeline
7. https://www.thelocal.fr/20171119/france-to-prevent-muslim-street-prayers-in-paris-suburb
8. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/24/french-police-make-woman-remove-burkini-on-nice-beach
9. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/22/frances-headscarf-war-attack-on-freedom
10. https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/02/03/france-abuses-under-state-emergency

Netherlands

Anti-Muslim prejudice in Netherlands is reported to be reflected in acts such as aggression against mosques, discrimination in employment and political participation. Aggression against mosques, which amounted to 46 cases, in 2016, are ranging from arson and graffiti to Depositing pigs' heads and threatening phone calls. 12

In the political sphere, there seems to be determined political will to adopt measures against Muslims' immigration to the country as well as a de'-Islamization attitude which includes decisions reject the temporary residence permits for Muslim asylum seekers, prevent women to wear head scarves, close down the mosques, Islamic schools and centers and prohibit the Quran13. That is, the overall atmosphere in Europe appears to be against Muslims which can be perceived as clear signs of Islamophobia.

Recommendations:

Being seriously concerned about the on-going hatred and discrimination against Muslims, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), calls on the NGOs in the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands to study ways of convincing the decision makers to move toward social inclusion of minorities specially Muslims.

ODVV calls on the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands to review the country s' hate crime laws and strategies to control the rise in the crimes. In addition, the States are recommended to study and address the factors that drive the perpetrators to committing crimes and develop new preventive measures.

ODVV also calls on the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands to pay due attention to the concerns expressed by human right groups while making amendments to domestic laws.

11. https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/08/burkini-ban-islamophobia-valls-france-secularism-islam

12. ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ (Eds). (2017). Islamophobia in Europe, 2016

13. previous source